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## Conceptual framework of innovation excellence model for higher education institutions

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### Abstract

This article presents the conceptual framework of Innovation Excellence Framework for education especially higher education institutions (HEI). Several factors were identified from previous studies through literature study and empirical findings. The original version of Total Performance Excellence Model was used as the main skeleton and its extended model called Value-Based Total Performance Excellence Model (VBTPTEM) as the basis for this framework. Innovation Excellence Framework provides the staff at all level in the university to embark on innovation capabilities endeavor towards improved university performance. Several predictors of performance in the earlier version of TPEM and VBTPTEM model have been regrouped into another viewpoint of university excellence in terms of innovation. Originally, there were 11 factors in the performance excellence model i.e. leadership, culture, objectives and strategy, resources management, change management, innovation values, best practices, employee-focused, stakeholder-focused, productivity-focused and total performance. Eventually, this article blends the available criteria into several sub-categories to give new insights towards empowering the innovation excellence at the HEI. The proposed conceptual framework is also presented.

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## 1. Introduction

Universities worldwide are aggressively embarked on innovation for achieving excellence. This is important for an organization such as higher education institutions (HEI) to empower its role and the innovation capabilities (Ibrahim 2013). This is to prepare the HEI for competing in the educational arena globally. Previously, achievement of HEI is measured through tangible yardstick such as number of research grants secured, number of products produced, number of publications and to name a few. Nowadays, intangible measurement is of great importance. Selznick (1957) pointed out that, for an organization to be institutionalized, it must be infused with values. In addition, the collapses of many giant corporations are due to lacking of embracement of organizational core values by their leaders. Following this, values as the soft performance metric should be given a due consideration. In short, performance measurement system is very vital in an organization (Ab Hamid 2013). Innovation is the important factor for competitive excellence in any organizations (Job & Bhattacharyya 2007) including higher education institutions. Thus, university performance should be measured through intangible innovation capabilities that are discussed in this article.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

This article discussed the conceptual framework for innovation excellence in HEI. Several factors are determined such as organizational strategy and objectives, resource management, change management, best practices and innovation capabilities. These factors have been discussed in Ab Hamid et al. (2014). For the conceptual model for achieving innovation excellence, all five factors are embedded with intangible performance measures through core values. These core values are the organizational values that are considered the most important that should be visible to all staff in the organization. Mokhtar et al. (2012) discussed thoroughly the core values beneath each constructs. It is believed that there exists causal relationships among the factors understudy and it is beyond the scope of this article. Although, many researches have been conducted on innovation excellence such as Martensen et al. (2007), Job & Bhattacharyya (2007) and Dahlgaard-Park & Dahlgaard (2008), but the model are rather different as proposed in this article. The integration of soft side constitutes an organizational excellence journey (Dahlgaard & Park-Dahlgaard 1999; Dahlgaard-Park et al. 1998; Martensen et al. 2007; Dahlgaard-Park 2012).

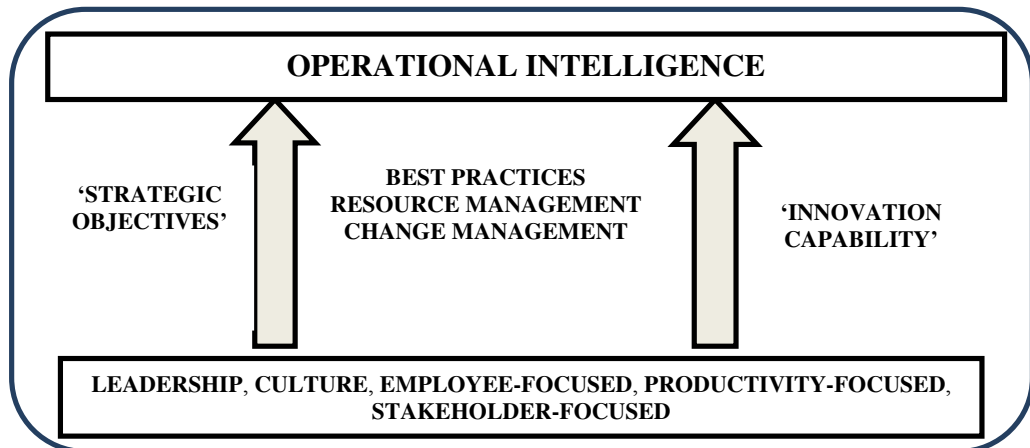


Fig. 1. Innovation Excellence Framework.

The conceptual model in Fig. 1 is a new version of succeeding the innovation excellence by focusing the proposed dimensions and eventually strives and sustain for organizational operational intelligence. The baseline of the model consists of leadership factor, culture, employee, productivity and stakeholder which are the combination of organizational capability and organizational focus (Fazli et al. 2003). In this article, we renamed it to 'organizational roots'. This has been the basis and pre-requisites for organizational excellence. Next, the second group consisted of strategic objectives, best practices, resource management, change management and innovation capability which are part of organizational capability in Fazli et al. (2003). In this article, we grouped this into 'organizational stem and leaf' as the mediator for accelerating towards achieving organizational excellence through capitalizing on innovation capabilities. Finally, the last part is the 'operational intelligence' which is higher than 'excellence'. In this group, the organization is said to be stable and are in the state of excellence. The operation of the organization has achieved the highest level of excellence and the organization has to maintain the excellence over time. Maintaining the excellence is very challenging and yet the organization has to sustain it. Therefore, we classified this as the operational intelligence; as compared to total performance by Fazli et al. (2003) and Mokhtar et al. (2012).

### 3. Concluding Remarks

This model is said to be a sustainable model for measuring the innovation specifically and organizational well-being generally, as all dimensions proposed are measured using value-based indicators. This is in line with Martensen et al (2007) who emphasised that innovation should be improved through soft aspects of innovation. Henceforth, organisational core values act as the soft aspect or intangible aspect that upholds the dimensions towards achieving the innovation excellence. The development of sustainable innovation excellence framework is timely as organisations stressed on key performance indicators as a cursor for total organizational success (Dahlgaard-Park & Dahlgaard 2008). Through the proposed framework, the academic institutions could be the managed and geared for a total excellence. This in turn would lead towards accomplishing the sustainable innovation excellence.

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